

employee in Sydney and a radius of ten miles of Sydney?—The difficulty is got over to a certain extent where they have a large range of employees to draw on. We cannot reckon on the trade here.

5. With regard to the night-watchmen, by law you have to give them the half-holiday at the present time?—Yes.

6. How do you manage that?—The half-holiday is practically from 10 to 12 o'clock at night.

7. That is what the Court has ruled?—Yes. In my case I have to stand by from 10 to 12 p.m. to let in the boarders until he arrives.

8. *Mr. Glover.*] You said that the night-porter is the most responsible person in your employ?—Yes.

9. Does that employee get a commensurate amount of wages for the work he discharges?—Yes, he gets £1 10s. a week and found. That is pretty nearly equal to £3 a week.

10. Do you give this individual any holiday—a week or a fortnight?—No.

11. Then the only holiday he gets is through the day?—He is off from 8 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night, and on one day a week until 12 o'clock at night.

12. What is the minimum wage paid in a second-grade first-class hotel?—The lowest wage I pay is to one of the housemaids, 15s. a week and her keep. The other housemaids get £1. It depends upon the work they have to perform.

13. Do you think all the proprietors in the second-grade first-class hotel trade treat their employees so well as you do in your establishment?—Yes.

14. Do you think it would be the average?—Yes, I think so. From inquiries I have made I find these concessions are given to them.

15. You have heard no expressions of dissatisfaction?—No, only expressions of satisfaction, and no wish for any change.

16. *Mr. McLaren.*] With regard to night-watchmen or porters: You say they occupy very responsible positions?—Yes, considering they have the lives of the guests in their keeping.

17. What would the board of those men cost when they are out of employment in Wellington?—I suppose they would not be able to get board and residence under £1 a week. Then it would be only ordinary board and residence at that price.

18. What did you mean by your answer to a previous question, when you said it would cost £1 10s.?—In my own house they get the same table as is supplied to guests, and it would cost them at least £1 10s. a week for similar fare.

19. Do you think it a fair thing that men carrying out such responsible duties should be limited to two hours by way of a half-holiday each week?—As I have already stated, they have time off from 8 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night. I have heard no expressions of dissatisfaction about it. Under the old law we had to give a week every three or six months. My porter did not want it. He came to me and asked me to pay him in lieu of the holiday. The employees say that if they were away from the house it would cost them more than they earn, and they would also be losing their pay, and, as they do not want the holiday, they do not want to be sent away.

20. Are some of those men single?—Most of them are single that I have had in my employ.

21. *Hon. Mr. Millar.*] Does your night-porter, so far as your knowledge goes, make anything outside the £1 10s. a week you pay him?—He gets tips, sir.

22. *Mr. W. Fraser.*] When you say that the night-porter is the most important servant in the hotel, do I understand you to mean that the position requires a trustworthy man—a man whom you could not replace by half an hour's notice?—Yes. We might have to try half a dozen men before we could get a suitable one. He must be a trustworthy and sober man. Sometimes, when a night-porter leaves, the licensee may take on three or four men, and while they are going through this probation he has himself to be up at night to see if the man he has put on is sufficiently trustworthy to hold the keys of the house.

DANIEL O'CONNOR examined. (No. 18.)

1. *The Chairman.*] Where do you come from?—The South Island, but I am at present in business in Cuba Street, running the Grand Central Private Hotel. In reference to this new Bill and the hours of night-porters, I might say that I do not work my night-porter the same number of hours as other hotels. I do not start my man until 11 o'clock. He works but sixty-three hours per week. It would be very inconvenient to have to give him a day or several days off, and would upset the whole arrangement of the house. With regard to reducing the hours from sixty-five to sixty for male workers in the house, we find it quite a narrow pinch now to get the work done in the sixty-five hours, and any reduction would be a very serious consideration with us. Under the present Arbitration Court award, which was made in a time of prosperity, we were granted sixty-five hours; and now, when the times are very much worse than they were two years ago, you want to reduce the hours. I know the times are bad, because in my last venture I lost £500, and so I am able to speak from very sad experience. The same remark applies to housemaids and waitresses. My housemaids are working at the present time about sixty-two to sixty-three hours a week. Any reduction on that, I think, would be a very unfair thing to the guests arriving at all hours of the day and night. There are no hours specified in the present Arbitration Court award for housemaids, although we do not work them more than sixty-two or sixty-three hours a week. If these new hours are insisted upon and get on to the statute-book, it will mean an addition of two or three hands to my staff. I employ about fifteen now. We should have to give them more hours off in the afternoon and put others in their place. Another thing is that owing to the hard times so many houses have changed hands, and some of the proprietors have gone through the Bankruptcy Court—notably the proprietor of the Albemarle Hotel. The Columbia Hotel has changed hands several times since it has been built—only two years back.